

## Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL

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INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

AMCONSUL TORONTO

UNCLAS MONTREAL 0396

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: PROVINCIAL PREMIERS UNDERCUT CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

REF: HALIFAX 77 0419

1. PROVINCIAL PREMIERS MET YESTERDAY IN MONTREAL TO DISCUSS WHERE THEY NOW STAND AND WHERE THEY ARE GOING RE MINORITY (I.E., FRENCH AND ENGLISH) LANGUAGE SERVICES. FINAL COMMUNIQUE MORE POSITIVE THAN THAT OF ST. ANDREWS (REFTEL) IN THAT QUEBEC PREMIER LEVESQUE ALSO SIGNED IT -- PRESUMABLY BECAUSE IT REINFORCED PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION IN EDUCATION, THUS UNDERCUTTING POSSIBLE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL MOVES IN THIS AREA.

2. KEY PHRASES IN COMMUNIQUE WERE: "EACH CHILD OF THE FRENCH-SPEAKING OR ENGLISH-SPEAKING MINORITY IS ENTITLED TO AN EDUCATION IN HIS OR HER LANGUAGE IN THE ELEMENTARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EACH PROVINCE WHERE NUMBERS WARRANT. ...DUE TO THE WIDE CULTURAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOREGOING PRINCIPLE WOULD BE DEFINED BY EACH PROVINCE."

3. MEETING NOT DESIGNED REACH CONSTITUTIONAL CONSENSUS NOR,  
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INDEED, REPEATED REQUEST OF GOQ FOR BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON SUBJECT. RAISON D'ETRE WAS TO REVIEW A REPORT OF PRESENT CONDITIONS IN EACH PROVINCE (PREPARED AS RESULT ST. ANDREWS MEETING) AND ANNOUNCE ON-GOING PLANS. ALL PARTIES DOWN-PLAYED ANY LIKELIHOOD OF SPECTACULAR RESULTS IN ADVANCE. PROPERLY. THIS DID NOT PREVENT FEDERATION DES FRANCOPHONES HORS DU QUEBEC DENOUNCING IT FOR "CHANGING NOTHING" AND SAYING

SIX MONTHS HAD BEEN WASTED.

4. COMPARISON OF WHO PROVIDES WHAT TO WHOM LEFT QUEBEC SMELLING LIKE A ROSE. NONETHELESS, AS MONTREAL STAR ARTICLE NOTED YESTERDAY, "SOME PROVINCES, LIKE ONTARIO, ARE PROMISING TO DO FOR THEIR MINORITIES AS MUCH AS QUEBEC DOES FOR ITS MINORITIES, BY EXPANDING GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN FRENCH. THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT IS COOPERATING BY SHRINKING ITS SERVICES IN ENGLISH, THEREBY MAKING IT EASIER FOR ONTARIO TO CATCH UP."

5. ON CBC "DECISION" PROGRAM LAST NIGHT, NEW BRUNSWICK PREMIER HATFIELD ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS URGED REPRESENTATIVE OF FEDERATION TO STOP STRESSING DISADVANTAGES FROM WHICH THEY SUFFER AND GIVE MORE PROMINENCE TO GAINS BEING MADE, WHICH COULD STIMULATE FURTHER POSITIVE STEPS. RESPONSE WAS ALONG LINE "THIS ALL WELL AND GOOD BUT WE ARE LOSING 'UNRECUPERABLE' GENERATIONS EVERY FIVE OR SIX YEARS THROUGH ASSIMILATION AND CAN NO LONGER WAIT FOR GRADUAL APPROACH."

6. ONTARIO PREMIER DAVIS REPRESENTED ON PANEL BY GERARD RAYMOND, ASST. DEP. MIN. OF EDUCATION, WHO NOT VERY EFFECTIVE IN DEFENDING ONTARIO GOVERNMENT POSITION OF REFUSING MAKE FRENCH "AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE" WHILE SEEKING CONCRETE PROVINCIAL EFFORTS INCREASE RIGHTS OF FRANCO-ONTARIANS IN EDUCATIONAL AND JUDICIAL AREAS. (PREMIER HATFIELD HAD EARLIER WONDERED ALOUD WHY MOTHERHOOD, AS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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"MOTHERHOOD RESOLUTION", NOW IN DISREPUTE. MODERATOR OF PROGRAM PICKED UP SAME THEME RE DAVIS COMMENT THAT LEGALIZING FRENCH RIGHTS ONLY A "SYMBOL" --"WHAT'S WRONG WITH SYMBOLS?" QUESTION NOT ANSWERED BY RAYMOND.)

7. COMMENT: ONTARIO'S GOOD INTENTIONS, THOUGH PRESUMABLY REAL, UNDER SERIOUS SUSPICION HERE DUE RECENT REFUSAL GRANT FRENCH OR BILINGUAL TRIAL TO PROMINENT QUEBECKER, GERARD FILION, WHICH SUBJECT OF MUCH PRESS CRITICISM. MEDIA NOT MUCH MORE IMPRESSED BY JOINT COMMUNIQUE IN VIEW LOOPHOLES THEREIN. FROM QUEBEC STANDPOINT HOWEVER, AND DESPITE REBUFF OF OTHER PREMIERS RE BI- OR MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON LANGUAGE RIGHTS, COMMUNIQUE APPEARS GIVE LEVESQUE GOVERNMENT ADDITIONAL AMMUNITION AGAINST FEDERAL INITIATIVE ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN THIS AREA.  
HARPER

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